



**Price of a barrel
of petroleum
today:**

US\$ 51.61

INSIDE TODAY

WORLD NEWS

WRONGLY HELD



In this image reviewed by the U.S. Military, razor wire lines the Guantanamo detention facility, pictured at sunrise, at the U.S. Naval Base, in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Nov. 19, 2008. A former Bush administration official said Thursday, March 19, 2009 that many detainees locked up at Guantanamo were innocent men swept up by U.S. forces unable to distinguish enemies from noncombatants.

See *INTERNATIONAL NEWS*

SPORTS NEWS

MARCH MADNESS



North Carolina's Ty Lawson prepares to put a sneaker on his injured foot during the second half of North Carolina's 101-58 win over Radford in a first-round men's NCAA college basketball tournament game in Greensboro, N.C., Thursday, March 19, 2009.

See *Sports Today*

De Palm Tours wins CATA "Premio Estrella" award

PALM BEACH - During the final night of CATA "De Palm Tours" won the "Premio Estrella" - an award for Best Incoming Tour Operator of the year 2008. The Premio Estrella is an award with which ATA recognizes the most outstanding Tour Operator from South America.

Because this year CATA celebrated its 20th anniversary ATA decided to recognize its local partners also. The idea behind this is that in its 20 years of existence CATA is made possible by the continual efforts of its local partners.

Among other categories such as the "Eileen Bartels Daal" award ATA bestowed a prize for best Local Tour Operator of which category De Palm Tours came out the absolute winner.

The company scored the highest amongst all on FIT arrivals and handling of Incentive Groups.

This recognition is a result of a common effort, hard work, and dedication of all De Palm Tours departments, in particular all operations departments.



De Palm Tours is very happy with winning the "Premio Estrella" and will concentrate its efforts to keep providing outstanding services and products, not only the South-American market, but to all

Aruba's visitors.

Pictured are from left to right: Angelica Vleeming-Muñoz (Corporate Marketing Manager), Stephanie Koole (Senior Sales Manager / International Sales), Angelo Tromp (Account

Executive Destination Management Services) Irene Perez (Sales Manager Latin America), Esme Pontilius (Representation Department Supervisor), Darlene York (Operations Supervisor) □

Headlining De Suikertuin

Read all about it.. in the Aruba Today!



Willeke Volgers and Gaston Verlaan were caught by the photographer reading about themselves in the Aruba Today last week as they were painting the day away. The two

are super busy, trying to get their restaurant De Suikertuin ready to open by June 1st. A lot has to be fixed as yet but the place looks already like a million bucks after a few days of hard work.

De Suikertuin will be serving breakfast, custom-made lunch and everything in between like specialty coffees, tea, cakes and whatever takes your fancy.

When finished, the historic mansion will be restored to its former glory and it will be an excellent venue for private parties and weddings.

Photo: Gaston and Willeke are delighted with De Suikertuin's coverage in the Aruba Today!



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Marge & Nick celebrate 25 years of love and family



Desiree Bikker and the events staff. Rev. Ruben Trappenberg officiated the ceremony as Marge and Nick re-pledged their marriage of 25 years. □
~ Photos by Julia Renfro ~



PALM BEACH – On March 17th, Marge had the birthday surprise of a lifetime when her husband Nick pulled a fast one on her. Marge knew that she was going to have a surprise of some sort for her birthday, but never in her wildest dreams could she imagine that Nick would exchange a new ring and renewed vows to Marge on her birthday in front of their children and grandchildren on the beach just before sunset. The ceremony was creatively orchestrated by the Aruba Marriott Wedding Coordinator



The Occidental Grand Night in White



PALM BEACH -- The Occidental Grand delivered a total surprise this week as delegates of CATA, the annual tourism conference hailing from all over Latin America were received at the resort for a gala evening dressed in white. The Grand Ballroom featured a spectacular show, a surrealistic celebration of music and dance, performed by acrobats and comics, members of the resort's Fun Club, a production, conceived by talented director Omar Chavez, and choreographed by the ever-creative, Prima Ballerina Violeta Petrova. The feast to the eyes was complemented by a culinary feast, an abundant buffet dinner prepared by the resort's culinary team. On the welcome committee, meetings and greeting the dignitaries arriving at the famed resort Miss Aruba 2009, flanked by Director of Sales Janith Agunbero and General Manager Jesus Cardoso, who was joined by Director Myrna Jansen, Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of her staff. □



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NOTICE:

Casino chips with old Aruba Marriott Sail Boat Logo can be cashed out at the Casino Cage until July 1, 2009.

No chip exchange is possible after July 1, 2009

Surprise celebration at Moby Dick's for Julieta

Have you every seen a real mermaid?



PASEO HERENCIA – Moby Dick's Restaurant hostess Julieta was surprised by the management and staff with a small celebration for her birthday.

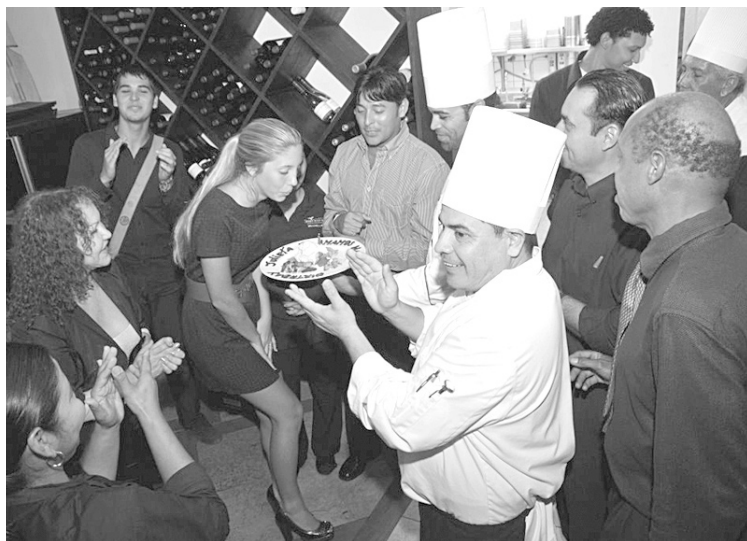
Ok, she is not really a mermaid, but she certainly looks like one.

Coincidentally, she is a Pisces like many of the other employees of this popular seafood restaurant in the Paseo Herencia Mall.

Co-Owner Gilbert Senchi, also a Pisces, made sure that not only did she get a delicious desert in her honor; she got to wear it all over her face.

Congratulations to Julia from Co-owners Brian and Luz Marina Reeve together with the staff of Moby Dick's and of course Aruba Today. ☐

Photos by Julia Renfro

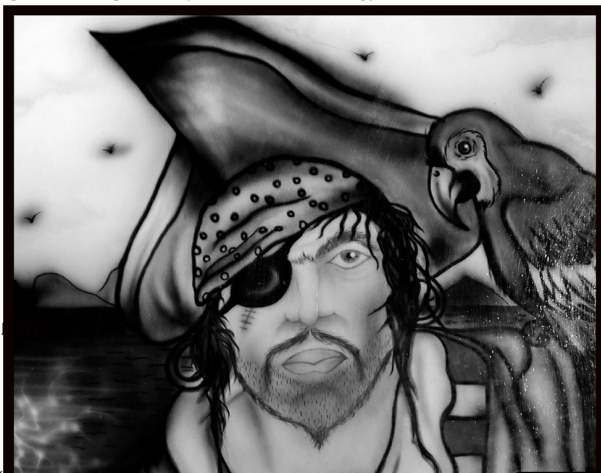


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CATA delegates enjoy a spectacular reveal



PALM BEACH — Aruba's newest resort, Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach flaunted its just completed looks this week, as delegates of the "Conferencia Annual di Turismo de Aruba," visited the property. Divi has been feverishly working to complete the expansion project at Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach that more than doubled the

capacity of the resort. In total 140 new suites were added, reports General Manager Astrid Muller. As seen in our pictures the expansion also included a new Caribbean restaurant, new spectacular pools and gorgeous grounds, anchoring four new beachside towers to create a stunning skyline for



the Phoenix Beach property, on famous Palm Beach. Muller personally conducted the property inspection with the CATA delegates flanked by members of her management team. The group visited the soon to be inaugurated, the sophisticated "Pure Beach" bar and restaurant where the CATA guests were offered



beverages and beautiful pastries. They also visited the tastefully appointed model studios and 1, 2 and 3 bedroom suites, and responded very enthusiastically as the upscale accommodations designed to please true aficionado of Caribbean vacations, were unveiled.

The Divi representatives for Latin America Jorge from Argentina, Lucrecia from Venezuela and Eric from Colombia expressed great confidence in the property's ability to attract elite visitors, with the contemporary chic new rooms, and luscious grounds. □





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National Anthem & Flag Day

March 18th celebrations at La Cabana



Pictured here the ceremonial walking of the flag, and the solemn and festive associate gathering, which culminated with delicious local snacks. □



EAGLE BEACH — All associates of La Cabana Beach & Racquet Club gathered in honor of Aruba's national day, March 18th, in the resort's conference room. They were all dressed in special celebration tee-shirts and they all gave the national anthem respect by standing while it was sung by Quincy Hasham, who also included a medley of Aruban favorites to

his excellent performance. The gathering also featured the history of the Aruban flag and shield as recounted by Rina Maduro and some patriotic poetry with Jessica Franken. Child singer Nathaniel Henriquez performed a love song for Aruba, and General Manager Joe Najjar wished his colleagues and their family members a most-enjoyable Flag & Anthem Day.



Sarah hopes Dutch heed Council of State advice

PHILIPSBURG - - Constitutional Affairs Commissioner Sarah Wescot-Williams hopes the Dutch Government will heed the advice from the Kingdom Council of State to reconsider the Dutch Justice Minister's authority of instruction regulated in the law proposal to establish the Prosecutors' Offices in the new constitutional set up.

The advice has not yet been made public, but Wescot-Williams has been privy to some of its "elements." She said it backed fully the stance of St. Maarten and Curaçao that the "authority of instruction" as outlined in the law proposal was "unconstitutional" and would interfere with the autonomy of the new countries.

Hopefully, the Dutch government now will see this is "not just another political issue for St. Maarten," but a stance also backed by neutral people in the field, such as Judge Bob Wit.

The Dutch Government does not have to follow the council's advice, but Wescot-Williams said she hoped the "view of this

side of the ocean" would be taken into consideration. The Council of State finalized its advice last week and sent the document to the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations BZK, Minister Plenipotentiary of the Netherlands Antilles in The Hague Paul Comenencia and a few other directly-involved authorities.

According to sources, the Council of State doesn't consider it necessary to grant the Dutch Minister of Justice special powers so that he or she can instruct the Prosecutors' Offices of the new countries to investigate and prosecute punishable acts. The Council apparently advised the Dutch Government to reconsider this specific

aspect of the law proposal, which was approved by the Kingdom Council of Ministers in December last year. Curaçao and St. Maarten each will have its own Prosecutor's Office, resorting under the authority of the Minister of Justice of the country in question. The BES islands will share a Prosecutor's Office, for

which the Dutch Minister of Justice will be responsible. The Kingdom Council of Ministers approved on December 5, 2008, the law proposal for the Prosecutors' Offices of countries Curaçao and St. Maarten, and for the BES islands Bonaire, St. Eustatius and Saba, which will become part of the Netherlands as so-called "public entities." □



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Hailing all the way from New Hampshire, this group celebrates brithdays with all you can eat Fajitas on Wednesday night.

Seafood as you've not had before Moby Dick's is the place to be tonight!

PASEO HERENCIA – inside is studded with Moby Dick's has one artwork, amazing glass mission; to take you to the depths of the blue ocean are dominated by gigantic to taste some of the most fountains, with water exquisite dishes to come running from ceiling to from the deep. What a floor along multicoloured truly beautiful restaurant lit fibre optic cables. The this is, and what a unique stairway is lined by an interior to match. The impressive painting which

runs along the complete wall. The menu promises to be a true seafood lovers dream. Lobsters, fresh fish fillets, shrimps, Moby Dick's has everything on the menu. There is of course a land lubbers section for those who are so disposed. The wine list is impressive to say the least, and the cocktails are definitely worth a taste.

Moby Dick's is open for lunch as well. The chef has made a well rounded, extensive menu for you to choose from. You will find what you want, whatever your craving may be at that time. The staff is amongst the friendliest on the island, ever so attentive to your every whim. So long story short, for unbelievable seafood in unique surroundings, go to Moby Dick's. You'll have a whale of a time!



This is the only place on the island to savor the legendary Bloody Oyster - the ultimate delicacy only known by deep sea connoisseurs who take pleasure in its delight on Sunday mornings. No need to wait for Sunday for this deep sea concoction of Fresh Oysters, Cooked Shrimp, Cold Vodka, Tomato Juice, Tabasco, Lime Juice, Black Pepper and Celery.



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Hard Rock CAFE

ARUBA

Hard Rock Cafe is "over the top" for fun, food and reviving great memories

The official opening of **Hard Rock Cafe Aruba** in January had all the glitz and glamour of any Hollywood carpet event, and the newest addition to this world famous brand of casual eateries is an entertaining journey through musical history, as well as offering a guaranteed great meal at a very reasonable price. Music is so much a part of our lives, often interwoven with the landmark moments; the first kiss, a marriage proposal, the first dance as man and wife. How many times have you heard or said, "**Honey, they are playing our song!**" Hard Rock has all those great

songs and videos in their play list, enveloping patrons in a world of music that brings back those special memories of moments that changed one's life. Founded by Isaac Tigrett and Peter Morton in 1971 and located right next door to Eric Clapton's recording studio in London, the first **Hard Rock Cafe** became an instant hit with those that loved a good "old-fashioned American hamburger" and started a legend, resulting in one of the largest and most successful leisure franchises existing today. Hard Rock's remarkable music memorabilia collection began with a red fender given

the founders by Eric Clapton, to mark his special table where he came to dine on a daily basis. Not to be outdone, other great names such as The Who followed his example; eventually leading to the assortment of music memorabilia that includes anything from a lock of hair to a five-ton psychedelic bus. In **Aruba** you find no buses, but a fascinating collection of instruments, posters, wild and wicked costumes and

other miscellaneous items, many of them autographed by the legendary performers they commemorate. Dozens of bits of memorabilia and high definition plasma screens create the music world ambiance that defines **Hard Rock Cafe**, as well as their diverse menu of fresh fajitas, authentic western barbecue, and of course, their famous certified Angus beef burgers, huge and juicy, the way a burger was meant to be.

Aruba's Flavour



Owners of the **Hard Rock Cafe Aruba** are particularly proud of the double bar that serves both inside and out; a stunning canopied terrace allows them to take full advantage of Aruba's famous tropical breezes and agreeable climate. Opening night featured The Wailers, the famous band that made their name with Bob Marley, direct from Jamaica. The appearance of such noted groups and live rock tributes are a trademark of Hard Rock Cafés around the world. **Hard Rock Cafe Aruba** is located in the South Beach Mall across from the Radisson Resort and open seven days a week, from 10:00 AM in the morning until 1:00 AM Sunday through Thursday and until 2:00 AM on the weekends. It is comforting to know there is a great place to go for late night munching and fun times within an easy stroll from all the Palm Beach Resorts offering not only quality food and beverage at reasonable prices, but a musical trip down **Memory Lane!**

At Occidental Grand Aruba Resort

Vincent & Joy tie the knot in paradise



Bella Aruba Photography by Angela

OCCIDENTAL - Vincent & Joy Ciamacco of Columbus, Ohio met 6 years ago on a blind date and have been together ever since. Within a year Vincent knew he wanted to spend the rest of his life with Joy. While on a business trip, he asked several people what they thought of for a perfect way to propose. He took their advice put them, all together and decided the time was right. The proposal day came and Vincent took Joy to a special place that had a waterfall, what he had planned did not include rain

but everything continued as Joy complained about her shoes getting ruined through the mud.

When they got to the waterfall he handed her a poem book and recited a poem from his head, she opened the book and found the pages cutout to form a hollowed out area with an engagement ring inside. Joy said yes as her eyes filled with tears.

They were married On February 14, 2004 in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

Their love is so special and



Bella Aruba Photography by Angela

strong that they keep the fire alive and decided on a five year renewal while on vacation in Aruba.

They were guests at Occidental Grand Aruba Resort where they enjoyed the all inclusive amenities. They were in contact with Kimberly Dammerman, wedding coordinator at Occidental who took care of all the details in making their renewal one to remember. Kimberly went above and beyond in making sure that Joy's dress was sewn after the zipper had broken minutes before she walked downstairs to meet her husband.

The renewal took place on March 1, 2009 on the premises of the resort with Reverend Robert Gibson who delivered the sermon. They vowed their love and sealed it with a kiss...

Following the romantic sermon Joy and Vincent signed their certificate, cut the cake and toasted to champagne. Bella Aruba Photography was there to make sure the evening was captured with the gorgeous backdrop of Aruba's sunset. Congratulations from Occidental Resort and Bella Aruba Photography. □

Photos by Angela Munzenhofer



Bella Aruba Photography by Angela



Bella Aruba Photography by Angela



Bella Aruba Photography by Angela



Bella Aruba Photography by Angela



Bella Aruba Photography by Angela

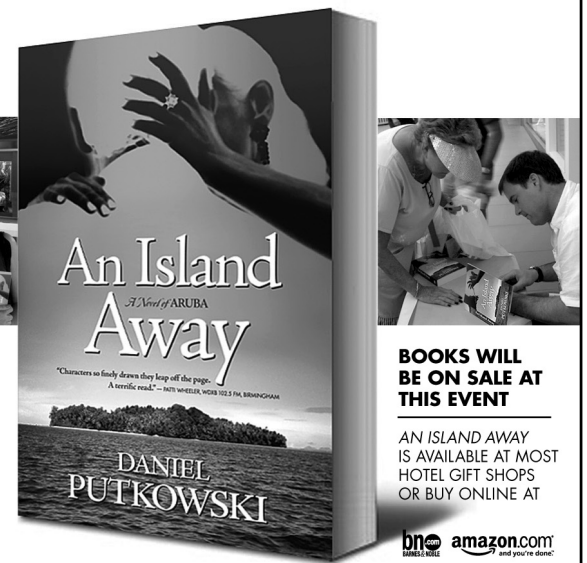
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At Aqua Grill restaurant

Bostonians know when to stick with a good thing



PALM BEACH – Aruba family, know a good thing repeat visitors, the Leibovitz when they taste it, and that

is why they have made Aqua Grill restaurant in Palm Beach a must-dine every time they visit Aruba.

From live Maine lobster to the island's largest raw bar, Aqua Grill offers seafood lovers an extensive menu of the freshest choices available. Award-winning Chef Scott Scheureman and his culinary team have created a menu of enduring classic, regional seafood dishes, along with contemporary cuisine presented in artful presentations.

Aruba's repeat guests, like the Leibovitz's, have contributed



to Aqua Grill's rise to the top of the island's dining scene since its opening seven years ago, and, according to members of the restaurant's staff, a repeat guest is the highest complement they could ask for! □

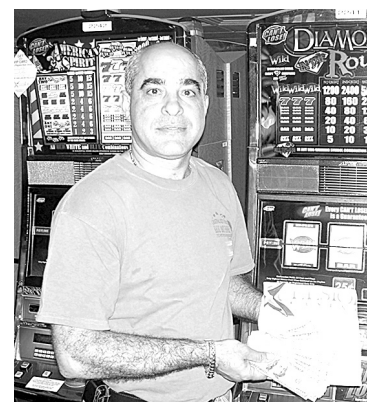
The Excelsior Casino Winner's Circle



Everyone is a winner at the Excelsior Casino. The Excelsior Casino is located in the Holiday Inn Resort, a 600 room facility. The Casino has been in existence for 30 years; 50% of our guests come from the United States, 30% from South America and the balance from Europe. The beautiful Excelsior Casino will satisfy your taste for games of chance. One of Aruba's finest casinos, the Excelsior Casino features Las Vegas style gambling of all games of chance as well as a beautiful sports betting area and poker room. The Excelsior Casino is the only casino in Aruba to offer 3-4-5 times odds on Craps and Double Deck Blackjack. Spanish 21 and Blackjack can be delt out of a shoe at your request. And, most of



all, the Excelsior Casino does not hit the soft 17. The Excelsior Casino features the largest Poker Room with limits as low as \$2-\$4 to \$50-\$100 no limit. No need to carry coins to the cashier! The Excelsior Casino's state of the art slot machines are totally Ticket-In, Ticket-Out. □



Dollar sinks for 2nd day in aftermath of Fed moves

By **TALI ARBEL and ERIN CONROY,**

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK — The dollar plunged against other major currencies again Thursday, as markets considered the long-term effects of the Federal Reserve's decision to pump more than \$1 trillion into the financial system.

The buck has dropped more than 6 cents against the euro in the past two days, including a record 3.51 percent fall Wednesday, as economists fear the Fed's massive bond-buying program could prompt inflation and weaken the dollar against other currencies.

The Fed said Wednesday it will buy up to \$300 billion of long-term government bonds over the next six months and will also step up its purchases of mortgage-backed debt securities. The effect of the actions will be to add hundreds of billions of dollars of new money into the financial system in an effort to break a logjam in lending with lower interest rates.

Although investors initially celebrated the news, they quickly began to focus on the dollar's decline and whether the currency might eventually inflate its way out of the value of those debts, said Joseph

Trevisani, chief market analyst at FXSolutions.

"The Fed has barely gotten started with this process, and the reaction has been stunning," Trevisani said. "This has brought what was once seen as on the horizon to a next-day event."

If the dollar continues to weaken substantially, "it will create many more problems for the government and the American consumer," Trevisani said. "It could completely undermine what they are trying to do."

On Thursday, the euro soared against the dollar to \$1.3662 from \$1.3424 late Wednesday in New York, reaching its

highest level since early January. The British pound, meanwhile, jumped to \$1.4511 from \$1.4223.

The dollar also fell sharply against the Japanese currency, buying 94.53 Japanese yen Thursday compared with 96.31 yen the day before.

In other New York trading, the dollar dropped to 1.1248 Swiss francs from 1.1440 francs late Wednesday, and fell to 1.2382 Canadian dollars from 1.2498. Meanwhile, commodities, which are bought and sold in dollars, soared.

Benchmark crude for April delivery jumped 7 percent to settle at \$51.61 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Oil prices hit \$52.25 earlier in the day, a price last seen on Dec. 1. Gold surged about \$70 an ounce to trade near \$960.

"Gold is a good indication about worries about inflation, because people buy it up when there's a lurking suspicion things will get worse," Trevisani said.

Bank of New York Mellon Corp. currency analyst Michael Woolfolk said he expects that any dollar weakness as a result of the Fed's actions will be temporary. The timing of the Fed's announcement was "unfortunate" for the dollar, he said, coming on the heels of a rally in stocks and improving sentiment about the U.S. economy.

The Fed's plans to buy bonds issued by its own government followed similar moves from the Bank of England and the Japanese and Swiss central banks.

The head of the European

Central Bank, Jean-Claude Trichet, has said there are no current plans to create money in euro-zone countries as the Fed and Bank of England are doing for dollars and pounds.

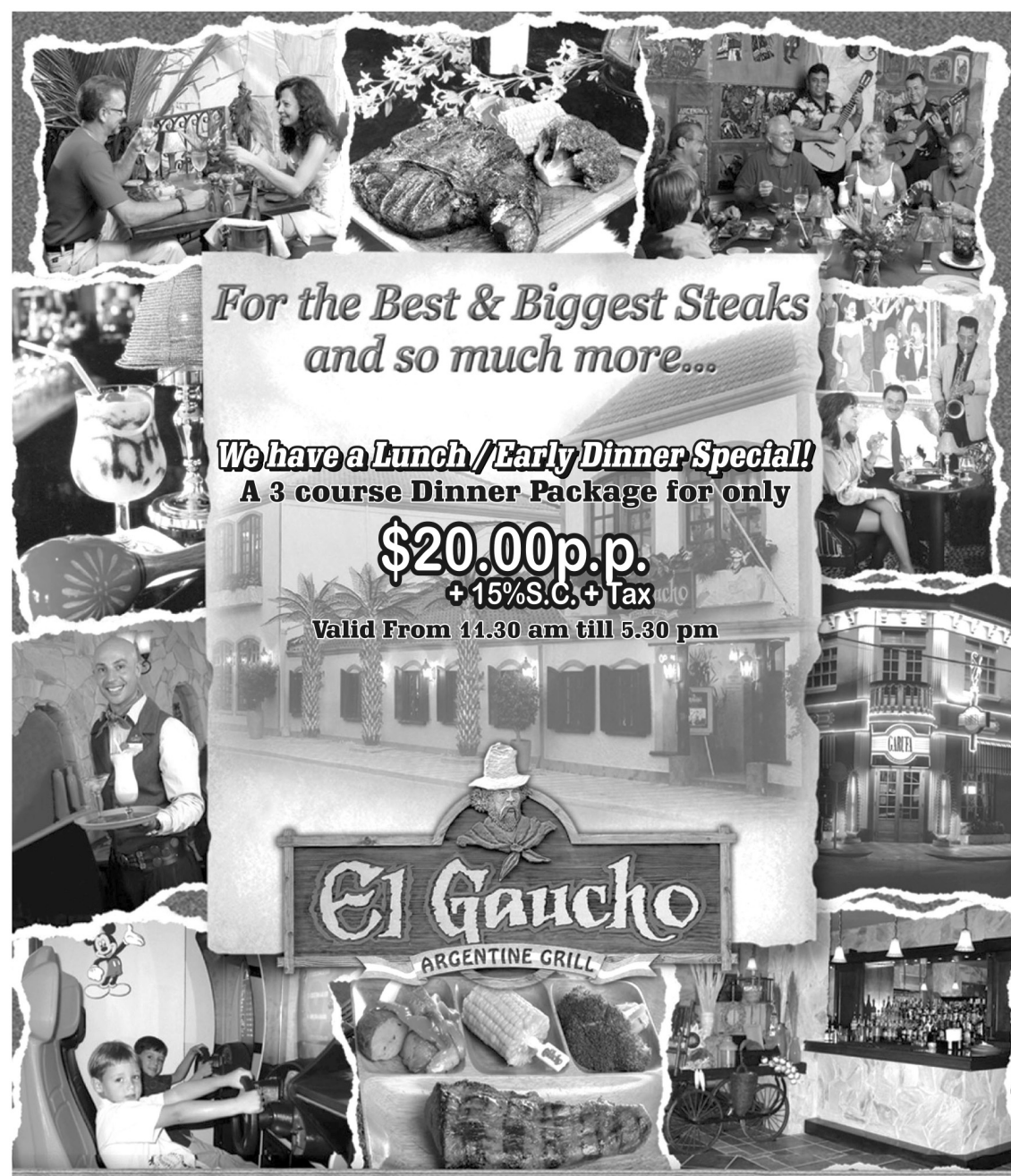
That cannot last, however, said Woolfolk. The ECB will very likely have to launch its own extraordinary monetary tactics, but the timing is uncertain. The dollar will stay below its fair market value until the ECB makes known how and when it will pursue its own measures for increasing the supply of euros, he said.

Some analysts agreed that the recent drop in trading isn't a precursor to a dollar crisis.

"The reality is it could be a very long time before the Fed's printing of money does anything to the level of prices," David Gilmore of Foreign Exchange Analytics in Essex, Conn. "Meanwhile, everyone in the world is in the same boat. For the dollar to fall much further against other currencies in some kind of semi-permanent fashion, you've got to sell me a better story somewhere else in the world."

John Merrill, chief investment officer of Tanglewood Wealth Management in Houston, contends the dollar fell in part because it had help up so well in recent months despite weak economic news and that a decline was overdue. He said he doesn't believe the dollar will fall because of demand overseas for commodities, which are priced in dollars.

"I don't think it's going to plunge from here," Merrill said □



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Stock rally fades as investors assess Fed moves

By TIM PARADIS and SARA LEPRO,

AP Business Writers

NEW YORK – Investors had a change of heart about the Federal Reserve's plans to buy Treasury bonds and doused Wall Street's two-week-old rally.

Banking and other financial shares pulled the market lower Thursday as investors worried the the Fed's plan would hurt the dollar and revive inflation. But energy stocks rose, getting a lift from soaring crude oil prices. The retreat came a day after stocks surged in reaction to the Fed's aggressive plans to pump more than \$1 trillion into the financial system by buying Treasury bonds and stepping up its purchases of other debt securities. The aim is to lower borrowing rates and stimulate lending.

But investors began to digest the possible downsides of the Fed's program, such as a potentially weaker dollar that can lead to higher prices for commodities such as oil and grains. And, eventually, staples like gas and food.

"After the initial euphoria surrounding the surprise announcement yesterday, there's a little more analysis of this going on and it's leading to some questions," said Todd Salamone, senior vice president of research at Schaeffer's Investment Research.

Skepticism about how long it would take for the effects of the Fed's program to take hold also weighed down shares, particularly those of banks. Investors have been hungry for any signs that confidence may finally return to battered U.S. banks, and the market has had a generally dim view of the government's efforts to date to get lending moving again.

The Dow Jones industrial average fell 85.78, or 1.2 percent, to 7,400.80.

The broader Standard & Poor's

500 index fell 10.31, or 1.3 percent, to 784.04, while Nasdaq composite index fell 7.74, or 0.5 percent, to 1,483.48.

Declining issues narrowly outnumbered advancers on the New York Stock Exchange, where consolidated volume came to 8.8 billion shares compared with 9 billion shares Wednesday. Wall Street's move lower ended, at least for now, a buying spree that has driven stocks sharply higher since last week. Even with Thursday's slide, the Dow is still up 13 percent and the S&P 500 index is up 15.9 percent over the past eight days. The gains are impressive considering that only a few weeks ago the market was trading at levels not seen in more than a decade.

Some analysts warned at the start of the rally that it could turn out to be the type of short-lived boost that comes about during bear markets, which are generally defined as a drop of at least 20 percent. The market is still about half below its peak in October 2007.

Joe Balestrino, a portfolio manager at Federated Investors Inc., said he doesn't expect the Fed's new money-injection program will be enough on its own to support an extended stock market advance.

"We're in a very weak environment," Balestrino said. "We don't see anything sustainable here."

Stephanie Giroux, chief investment strategist at retail brokerage TD Ameritrade, said she was optimistic that the Fed's latest medicine would work, but that any rebound is likely to be "slow and muted."

Some of traders' jitters Thursday came ahead of a quarterly expiration of options contracts on Friday. The sudden settling of many of those transactions can cause a surge in trading volume and more volatility in stock prices.

Energy stocks bucked the market's slide as oil surged above \$50 a barrel. Oil jumped as the dollar sank against other major currencies in response to the Fed announcement. When the greenback weakens it essentially makes crude cheaper in other currencies.

Chevron Corp. gained 54 cents, or 0.8 percent, to \$67.13, while Occidental Petroleum Corp. rose \$2.14, or 3.8 percent, to \$59.98. Light, sweet crude rose \$3.47, or 7 percent, to settle at \$51.61 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Investors got a dose of good news Thursday from General Electric Co., which forecast a profitable first quarter and full year for its struggling finance unit. □



A television screen displays images of AIG chairman and CEO Edward Liddy testifying on Capitol Hill, as traders work the floor at the New York Stock Exchange March 18, 2009 in New York City. Swept up by a wave of populist economic anger, the US House of Representatives overwhelmingly voted Thursday to slap a 90 percent tax on bonuses at bailed-out firms like insurer AIG.

(AFP/Getty Images/Spencer Platt)



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Could Natasha Richardson Have Been Saved?

Bonnie Fuller

How can it be possible for a healthy 45 year-old woman to take a spill on a "bunny hill" and end up brain dead within the day?

That's the question that I posed to neurologist Dr. Dexter Sun, who practices at New York Presbyterian Hospital/Cornell in New York City. First of all, rest assured he said: this is a highly unusual case. Normally, a tragedy like this occurs only after a very heavy impact accident, says Dr. Sun.

With that said, Dr. Sun explained that there are three particular possibilities that could account for Natasha Richardson's state:

1. "She may have a fairly rare underlying hematology condition called hypercoagulation, in which she lacks a blood clotting factor," says Dr. Sun. This could be a genetic factor which had gone unnoticed throughout her life until now. When the clotting factor is missing, a minor bleed can become a hemorrhage.
2. It's possible that Natasha could have been taking a blood thinner like coumadine, for another medical condition, that would have made it much more likely for her to bleed after any head injury, according to Dr. Sun.
3. Finally, and most likely, she did have a harder spill than what has been reported. Sometimes when this happens "you can have a high level cervical spine fracture or a fracture at the base of the skull," says Dr. Sun. When this occurs, and the injured person continues to move around as Natasha did -- not realizing that she was seriously hurt -- the spine can touch the brain stem and cause a severe brain injury.

A high impact fall on the head can also cause three different types of bleeding within the brain: 1) an intracranial hemorrhage, which begins as a microscopic rupture of a blood vessel deep within the brain, 2) a subdural hematoma, which is a bleed that occurs in the dura, which is the outer layer of the brain, or 3) an epidural hematoma, which is a hemorrhage, that takes place between the outer skull and the dura.

As for why Natasha initially seemed perfectly fine after her spill, apparently the hemorrhage can begin in one small spot in the brain and then grow in intensity.

All of these types of bleeding and the cervical spine fracture, result in dramatic swelling of the brain and pressure in the skull, which also pushes down dangerously on the brain stem, which is the center of life, according to Dr. Sun.

Big question: Was there ever a chance to save Natasha Richardson's life? If she hadn't insisted that she was fine and walked back to her room, could prompt medical treatment have made a difference?

Since initially there was no indication that Natasha's life was in danger, it's unlikely that she could have been saved. □

Ooops! There Goes Mrs. Madoff's Piano!



The liability of political limbo in Israel

By Bill Glucroft

Fairfield, Conn. — The problem Israel faces in the aftermath of February's national elections is neither right wing nor left wing. It's getting trapped in a political limbo.

Newly designated Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's effort to form a functional government may be the beginning of the end of Israeli politics, and with it, a peace process that has never been more essential for both Israel and the Palestinians. Israel's electoral system is famous for its instability. Governments rise, governments fall; it's the cyclical nature of parliamentary politics, especially in an ethnic democracy as rancorous as Israel.

Last month's elections, however, reveal systemic failure brought on by decades of avoiding matters as critical as the national identity of the state, long-term policy toward occupation and settlements, and overall adherence to the status quo.

The absence of bold, pragmatic political leadership since 1948, including the necessary confrontation of religious and political extremists after 1967, now threatens the very existence of Israel as a Jewish state that is also moral and democratic.

To form the kind of center-right government Mr. Netanyahu says he would like to administer, he needs the Kadima party as a moderating force. For that to happen, he would have to accept the party's (slightly) more dovish platform without offending his far-right supporters. It's a tough sell, and even if he succeeded in cobbling together such a coalition, Kadima would probably look for the first opportunity to bring it down and call for new elections.

Netanyahu could form a government without Kadima, relying on the slim majority in the Knesset who already support him. The problem is, that would be a government of only right-wingers, an ideological imbalance that would pull Netanyahu — a hard-line hawk who, given the opportunity, says he would get rid of Hamas — further to the right than he might like.

How did Israel's right, particularly Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beytenu party (now the country's third-largest political party, ahead of once-mighty Labor) get so powerful? In the same way that Arab extremists (both political and militant) gained power in the past: Largely moderate and secular (albeit autocratic) regimes empowered them. Voting for extremists helped the people vent their anger. It also let national leaders avoid having to address their countries' real problems.

In Israel, that sort of kowtowing coupled with public disillusionment about the peace process has created

a situation in which neither all-out peace nor all-out war seems likely to deliver the security Israelis crave. That makes doing nothing the most palatable option, which benefits nobody but the settlers.

The consequences of 40-plus years of exploiting the occupation as a means of fulfilling both nationalist zeal for settling land and biblical obsession with restoring the Jews' covenant with God are making themselves apparent. Yet government after government has put off deciding what would be the state's official relationship with the land it captured in 1967, and the people who became its subjects.

As long as Israel's settlers and nationalists didn't threaten the halls of power, they could keep building their settlements, often with the direct or tacit support of the government. The thing is, in Israel, land is power, so as Israel's right expanded its influence over the West Bank, it expanded its influence over politics, too.

Settlements were originally viewed as a benefit to Israeli security — a forward tripwire alerting to an invading army, as well as a divide-and-conquer tactic for controlling the territory. Now, after a couple intifadas, failed peace deals, and disadvantageous demographics, those settlements are pushing a security-sanctioned occupation ever closer to an occupation-sponsored apartheid, making it ever harder to create a Palestinian state.

This is the reality in which Netanyahu must now forge a government. Yes, he's right wing, but more like a fiscal conservative — to use American political parlance — with a streak of pragmatism. While he would probably stonewall sincere final-status negotiations and do little to stop settlement growth, Netanyahu has also spoken of an "economic peace." That isn't enough to save Israel or create Palestine, but it shows he's not an implacable ideologue like his supporters to the right.

Ultimately, no matter who's prime minister or who's in the government, no Israeli leader can really walk the talk of two states; the political and security risks are too great.

That leaves it to Israel's only trusted ally, the United States, to push Israel past its comfort zone with unrelenting engagement and tough love, as it did 30 years ago to help bring about the treaty with Egypt. The days of serving as enabler of Israel's bad habits must end; otherwise we face the potential for permanent political limbo, and with it, any hope of a viable Palestine and a secure and democratic Israel. Bill Glucroft frequently writes on the Middle East.

He worked for an Israeli Arab advocacy organization in Haifa and blogs at mediabard.org. □

'60 Minutes' creator Hewitt diagnosed with cancer



In this photo handout released by Picturehouse, 'Who The \$#%& Is Jackson Pollock' executive producer Don Hewitt is shown at the New York Premiere, Wednesday, Nov. 08, 2006.

(AP Photo/Picturehouse, Dave Allocca, file)

NEW YORK – Don Hewitt, the legendary mastermind of CBS News' "60 Minutes," is battling pancreatic cancer.

"60 Minutes" spokesman Kevin Tedesco said Thursday that the 86-year-old Hewitt has been diagnosed with a small, contained tumor. Doctors will evaluate the cancer to determine a course of treatment.

Hewitt was already a veteran CBS Newsmen in 1968 when he created "60 Minutes," pioneering the TV newsmagazine format. He served as executive producer of the program until his retirement in 2004. □

Ski helmet law mulled after Richardson death

By ROB GILLIES,
Associated Press Writer

TORONTO – Quebec is considering making helmets mandatory on ski slopes following the death of actress Natasha Richardson and just weeks after doctors called for a similar measure, the sports minister said Thursday.

Richardson was not wearing a helmet when she fell Monday taking a beginners ski course in Quebec. The New York City medical examiner's office said she died Wednesday of blunt impact to the head.

Richardson's death has given a new urgency to the province's plans, said Jean-Pascal Bernier, a spokesman for Sports Minister Michelle Courchesne.

Courchesne, met with emergency room doctors this week and will meet with Quebec ski resort owners and operators in the coming weeks, Bernier said.

Quebec emergency room doctors tried to persuade Courchesne to make it mandatory during their meeting. The doctors first called for mandatory use of helmets three weeks ago.

"The minister wants to see what kind of regulation can be made by the government to make the wearing of the helmet an obligation," Bernier

told The Associated Press.

Bernier said Courchesne would not be meeting with Mont Tremblant resort officials about the 45-year-old actress's death.

Before Richardson's death, the debate over helmet use surfaced last month in Ontario after a 13-year-old South Korean exchange student who wasn't wearing a helmet hit a tree and died.

Between 1990 and 2008, at least 39 people died on Quebec's ski slopes, the provincial coroner's office said. A report released last year suggested that of the 26 deaths between 1990 and 2004, 14 were the result of head injuries. Helmets were worn in just two of those 14 cases.

Ski operators are among the most vocal opponents to mandated helmet use.

Alexis Boyer of the Quebec Ski Areas Association said he supports the use of helmets, but does not back a law mandating their use, saying it would put operators in the position of having to police their guests.

Valerie Powell of the Canada Safety Council said the group would like to see everybody wear helmets. "By no means will a helmet save you 100 per cent but it's definitely a step in the right direction to try to prevent brain damage or something like that," Powell said. □



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and Hans Heijink together with the staff Romalo, Heidi, Mariella, Denise and Chef Gerben work hard keeping the restaurant **open 7 days a week from 4 pm till 11pm** for everyone to enjoy. The ambiance at the restaurant is out of this world, whether dinning inside in the relaxed air-conditioned dinning room or outside on the terrace to enjoy the tropical breeze and daily live music. Most guests come in early for the **daily fresh catches**, such as Red snapper, grouper, mahi mahi, wahoo and tuna. Check with the server to find out about the Catch of the day. The chef will be more than happy to prepare your fish the way you like it best: grilled, deep-fried,



pan-fried or the chef's choice. **Every Wednesday, seafood specials are prepared** depending on what the Fishermen bring in fresh out of the water that afternoon. These specials usually include fresh Caribbean lobster and pounds of peeled shrimps. **Fishes and More** is for everyone, from large groups, families, couples and even singles who can't shake the seafood addiction can stop in for a fix of Pina Colada Shrimp. For those who like to try something different or have had their fill of spectacular seafood, the chef prepares a wonderful array of filet



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U.S. Army soldiers wait go out on a routine patrol in Baladiyat, an eastern neighborhood of Baghdad, Iraq, Thursday, March 19, 2009. Sunni and Shiite lawmakers on Thursday warned that political and economic challenges could derail Iraq's progress toward stability as the country enters its seventh year of war. After six years of conflict and tens of thousands of deaths, violence has declined sharply nationwide, although attacks continue and the insurgency remains potent in northern Iraq.

Associated Press

As Iraq war enters seventh year, focus on politics

By ROBERT H. REID
Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD (AP) — Sunni and Shiite lawmakers warned Thursday that political and economic challenges could derail the country's progress toward stability as the Iraq war entered its seventh year.

After six years of war and tens of thousands of deaths, violence has declined sharply nationwide — especially in Baghdad — although the Sunni-led insurgency remains potent in northern Iraq. An Associated Press count recorded at least 288 Iraqi civilians and security forces killed in February 2009, a 63 percent reduction compared to 769 killed in the same month a year ago. The Iraqi government held no official ceremony to mark the start of the war, which kicked off before dawn on March 20, 2003 — March 19 in Washington — with a U.S. missile and bomb attack in south Baghdad in an unsuccessful attempt to kill Saddam Hussein. With violence at wartime lows, Sunni and Shiite politicians are focusing more on economic and political issues that the U.S. and many Iraqis fear could stoke the war after U.S. troops begin drawing down this year.

“The political process is full of tensions and

contradictions and the situation in Iraqi will deteriorate if political progress isn't made,” Sunni lawmaker Osama al-Nujaifi said. “There are still a lot of challenges ahead, including unemployment and the immigration millions of Iraqis abroad.”

He cited the country's budget crisis after severe cuts had to be made following the steep drop in oil prices from a high of \$150 per barrel last summer to just over \$50 per barrel on Thursday. “We live in a critical economic situation,” he said. “There is a lot to be accomplished before we can express our optimism.”

As a sign of improved security, the Tourism Ministry announced Thursday that an eight-member tourist group — five Britons, two Americans and one Canadian — are touring the country until Sunday. The tour, organized by a British travel service, includes visits to the largely peaceful Kurdish north, Baghdad and the ancient ruins of Nineveh, Babylon and Ur, where the Bible says the Prophet Abraham was born. Political and economic problems have grown even as U.S. plans to withdraw combat troops by September 2010, with all American soldiers gone by the end of the following year according to a U.S.-Iraqi security agreement.

Continued on Page B6



In this Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2009, file photo Attiqullah, 10, son of Hafizullah Shahbaz Khel, an Afghan detainee, shows documents proclaiming his father's innocence during an interview at his uncle's home on the outskirts of Kabul, Afghanistan in an effort to get him released from U.S. custody at Bagram Air Base. President Obama's administration has echoed the administration of former President George W. Bush in maintaining that detainees in Afghanistan have no constitutional rights.

Associated Press

Ex-Bush admin official: Many at Gitmo are innocent

By ANDREW O. SELSKY

Associated Press Writer

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Many detainees locked up at Guantanamo were innocent men swept up by U.S. forces unable to distinguish enemies from noncombatants, a former Bush administration official said Thursday.

Continued on Next Page

NJ considers ban on bare-it-all 'Brazilian' wax



In this June 21, 2002 file photo, visitors and residents spend the day on the beach in Belmar, N.J., on this first day of summer. New Jersey is drawing the line when it comes to bikini waxing. The state Cosmetology and Hairstyling Board is moving toward a ban on genital waxing altogether after two women reported being injured. Both women were hospitalized for infections following so-called “Brazilian” waxes. The board will decide on April 14, 2009.

Associated Press
See Page B3



In this image reviewed by the U.S. Military, a Guantanamo detainee, seen through a glass window, sleeps on a mattress on the floor of his cell, at Camp 5 detention facility, at the U.S. Naval Base, in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Nov. 19, 2008. A former Bush administration official said Thursday, March 19, 2009 that many detainees locked up at Guantanamo were innocent men swept up by U.S. forces unable to distinguish enemies from noncombatants.

Associated Press

INNOCENT

Continued from Page B1

"There are still innocent people there," Lawrence B. Wilkerson, a Republican who was chief of staff to then-Secretary of State Colin Powell, told The Associated Press. "Some have been there six or seven years."

Wilkerson, who first made the assertions in an Internet posting on Tuesday, told the AP he learned from briefings

and by communicating with military commanders that the U.S. soon realized many Guantanamo detainees were innocent but nevertheless held them in hopes they could provide information for a "mosaic" of intelligence.

"It did not matter if a detainee were innocent. Indeed, because he lived in Afghanistan and was captured on or near the battle area, he must know something of importance," Wilkerson

wrote in the blog. He said intelligence analysts hoped to gather "sufficient information about a village, a region, or a group of individuals, that dots could be connected and terrorists or their plots could be identified."

Wilkerson, a retired Army colonel, said vetting on the battlefield during the early stages of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan was incompetent with no meaningful attempt to discriminate "who we were transporting to Cuba for detention and interrogation."

Navy Cmdr. Jeffrey Gordon, a Pentagon spokesman, declined to comment on Wilkerson's specific allegations but noted that the military has consistently said that dealing with foreign fighters from a wide variety of countries in a wartime setting was a complex process. The military has insisted that those held at Guantanamo were enemy combatants and posed a threat to the United States.

In his posting for The Washington Note blog, Wilkerson wrote that "U.S. leadership became aware of this lack of proper vetting very early on and, thus, of the reality that many of the detainees were innocent of any substantial wrongdoing, had little intelligence value, and should be immediately released."

Former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Vice President Dick Cheney fought efforts to address the situation, Wilkerson said, because "to have admitted this reality would have been a black mark on their leadership."

Wilkerson told the AP in a telephone interview that many detainees "clearly had no connection to al-Qaida and the Taliban and were in the

wrong place at the wrong time. Pakistanis turned many over for \$5,000 a head."

Some 800 men have been held at Guantanamo since the prison opened in January 2002, and 240 remain. Wilkerson said two dozen are terrorists, including confessed Sept. 11 plotter Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who was transferred to Guantanamo from CIA custody in September 2006.

"We need to put those people in a high-security prison like the one in Colorado, forget them and throw away the key," Wilkerson said. "We can't try them because we tortured them and didn't keep an evidence trail."

But the rest of the detainees need to be released, he said.

Wilkerson, who flew combat missions as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and left the government in January 2005, said he did not speak out while in government because some of the information was classified. He said he feels compelled to do so now because Cheney has claimed in recent press interviews that President Barack Obama is making the U.S. less safe by reversing Bush administration policies toward terror suspects, including ordering Guantanamo closed.

The administration is now evaluating what to do with the prisoners who remain at the U.S. military base in Cuba.

"I'm very concerned about the kinds of things Cheney is saying to make it seem Obama is a danger to this republic," Wilkerson said. "To have a former vice president fearmongering like this is really, really dangerous." □

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NJ considers ban on bare-it-all 'Brazilian' wax

By BETH DeFALCO
Associated Press Writer

TRENTON, N.J. — New Jersey is drawing the line when it comes to bikini waxing. The state Board of Cosmetology and Hairstyling is moving toward a ban on genital waxing after two women reported being injured in their quest for a smooth bikini line. Both women were hospitalized for infections following so-called "Brazilian" bikini waxes; one of the women has filed a lawsuit, according to Jeff Lamm, a spokesman for New Jersey's Division of Consumer Affairs, which oversees the cosmetology board.

Technically, genital waxing has never been allowed — only the face, neck, abdomen, legs and arms are permitted — but because bare-it-all "Brazilians" weren't specifically banned, state regulators haven't enforced the law.

"The genital area is not part of the abdomen or legs as some might assume," Lamm said.

Officials with the National Cosmetology Association and National-Interstate Council of State Boards of Cosmetology said they were unaware of another state that has banned genital waxing.

Regular bikini waxes would still be allowed.

Genital waxing can be dangerous in that the hot wax can irritate or tear delicate skin in the bikini area, resulting in infections, ingrown hairs and rashes, according to skin care experts.

Despite such risks, millions of American women — and some men — choose to have the hair down there ripped away, and a majority of salons in New Jersey offer the procedure for between \$50 to \$60.

The state Board of

Cosmetology meets next on April 14 and will decide whether to move forward with banning the procedure, made popular in Brazil to accommodate skimpy thong bikinis.

The earliest the ban could take effect would be sometime in May, Lamm said, and salons that continue to perform it could be fined.

For salon owners, discontinuing the popular service could mean a substantial drop in business, especially as summer swimsuit season nears.

Spa owner Linda Orsuto, who owns 800 West Salon & Spa in Cherry Hill, estimates that most of 1,800 bikini waxes performed at her business last year were Brazilian-style.

"It's huge," she said, adding that her customers don't think their bikini lines are anyone's business but their own. "It's just not right."

She said many customers would likely travel across state lines to get it and some might even try to wax themselves.

Dallas school accused of staging fights

By DANNY ROBBINS,
Associated Press Writer

DALLAS — The Dallas school system was rocked by allegations Thursday that staff members at an inner-city high school made students settle their differences by fighting bare-knuckle brawls inside a steel cage. The principal and other employees at South Oak Cliff High knew about the cage fights and allowed the practice to continue, according to a 2008 report by school system investigators.

"More than anything, I'm in shock and disbelief—shocked that this could ever occur and shocked that it would be condoned by a professional administrator," said Jerome Garza, a member of the Dallas school board.

The report, first obtained by The Dallas Morning News, describes two instances of fighting in an equipment cage in a boys' locker room between 2003 and 2005. It was not clear from the report whether there were other fights.

Superintendent Michael Hinojosa told the newspaper that there were "some things that happened inside of a

cage" and called the fights "unacceptable."

No criminal charges were ever filed, and there was no mention in the report of whether anyone required medical attention or whether any employees were disciplined. A district spokesman would not comment.

The allegations came to light during a grade-fixing investigation that eventually cost the high school its 2005 and 2006 state basketball titles. School officials were suspected of altering students' grades so that they could remain eligible to play for South Oak Cliff, a perennial basketball powerhouse in one of the poorer sections of the city. In an interview with the Morning News, Donald Moten, who retired as principal last year, denied any fights were held.

"That's barbaric. You can't do that at a high school. You can't do that anywhere," Moten said. "Ain't nothing to comment on. It never did happen. I never put a stop to anything because it never happened."

In the report, a teacher was quoted as saying Moten told

security personnel to put two fighting students "in the cage and let 'em duke it out."

The report said a hall monitor, Gary King, told investigators he witnessed the head of campus security and an assistant basketball coach place two students in the cage to fight.

Another hall monitor, Reno Savala, told investigators he came upon two students fighting in the cage "bare-fisted with no head or eye protection." Savala said the assistant coach was watching the fight and broke it up when Savala told him to.

"It was gladiator-style entertainment for the staff," Frank Hammond, a fired counselor who has filed a whistle-blower lawsuit against the district, told the newspaper. "They were taking these boys downstairs to fight. And it was sanctioned by the principal and security."

Hammond did not actually witness any of the fights, according to the report.

Garza, the school board member, said the board should look into whether criminal charges should be filed.

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Democrats blame each other on AIG bonuses

By **JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS**

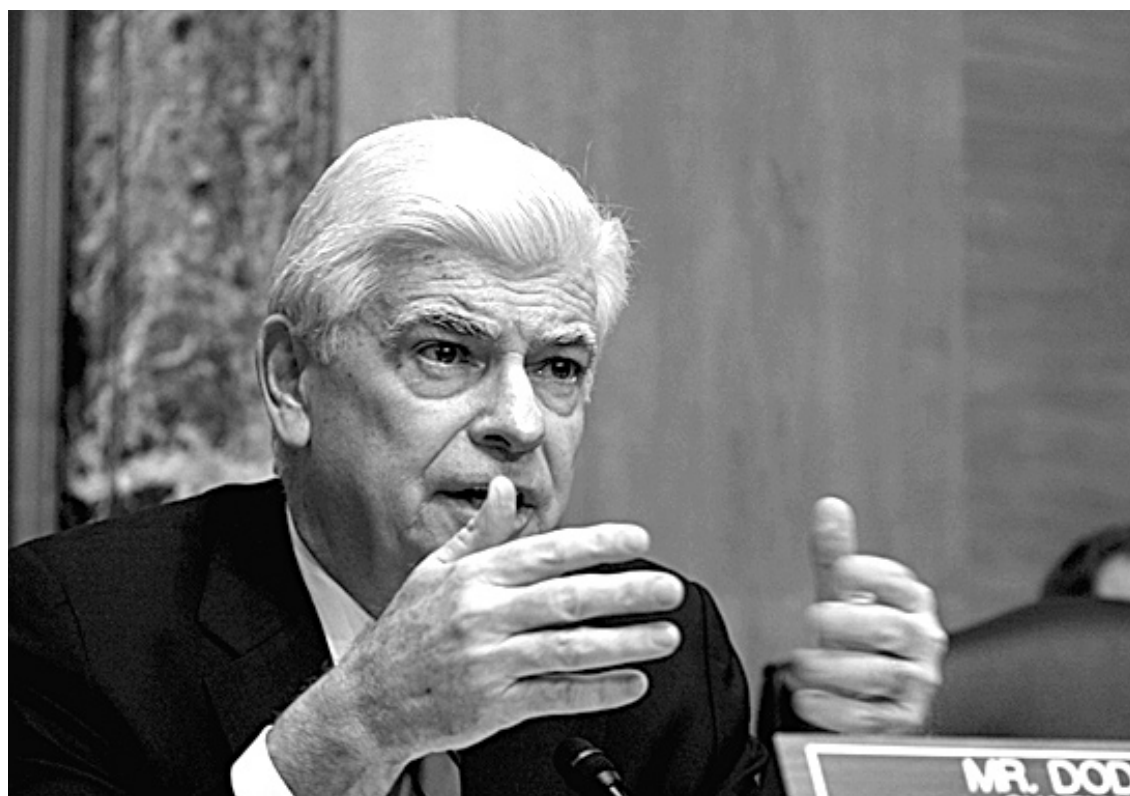
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The case of the missing AIG bonus limits has become a tale of political intrigue and Democratic infighting that could threaten the re-election chances of a top senator and the credibility — if not the career — of one of President Obama's top advisers.

As the House passed new legislation Thursday to crack down on the outrage-inspiring bonuses, Sen. Chris Dodd of Connecticut, the Banking Committee chairman, and Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner engaged in finger-pointing about who was responsible for Congress' failure to prevent them in the first place.

Dodd, a five-term senator, was already facing a tough re-election contest in 2010. He says the Obama administration insisted he modify his proposal to rein in bonuses at companies getting billions of dollars in financial bailouts so that it would only apply to payments agreed to in the future — thus clearing the way for the AIG payouts. It was that or have his executive pay limits dropped altogether from the \$787 billion stimulus measure that passed last month, Dodd says.

He agreed to the changes "in order to preserve the amendment," Dodd told



Senate Banking Committee Chairman Sen. Christopher Dodd of Conn. questions witnesses on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, March 19, 2009, during the committee's hearing on bank regulation and supervision.

reporters Thursday. "They sought it; I didn't. They asked for the changes ... and so we agreed to those changes."

Geithner said Thursday that his staff merely pointed out that without the change, the government risked being sued by executives in line to get big bonuses from bailout recipients.

"What we did is just express concern about the vulnerability of a specific part of this provision, the legal challenge, as you would expect us to do. That's part of the legislative process," he told CNN.

The treasury chief also

appeared to back away from the administration's previous assertion that Geithner first learned of the bonuses last week. Interviewed on CNN, Geithner said only that he "learned of the full scale and scope of these specific" bonus payments at that point.

Both men had positive things to say about each other despite the dispute over who watered down the bill.

"He has the president's support and backing and he has mine at this point," Dodd said of Geithner.

Geithner told CNN that Dodd "has played an enormously important leadership role in this, and he's doing the right thing."

Late Thursday night, a Treasury spokesman said that the conversations between Treasury and Dodd's staff were part of the normal legislative process.

"Treasury staff raised a general concern about broad legal challenges to the retroactivity of the amendment, including constitutional claims, but did not insist on any changes or receive any resistance from the senator's staff," Treasury spokesman Isaac Baker said in a statement.

The situation has Dodd on the defensive even as party strategists tag him as the most politically vulnerable sitting

Democratic senator.

"He was in trouble before this controversy, and this just makes his problems worse," said Douglas Schwartz, director of the Hamden, Conn.-based Quinnipiac University Poll. Dodd was essentially tied in a hypothetical matchup with much lesser-known former GOP Rep. Rob Simmons, according to a survey Schwartz released last week.

It also poses a steep challenge for Geithner at a time when he badly needs credibility and cooperation from Congress to navigate a deep recession, stabilize the troubled financial system and implement new rules aimed at preventing another meltdown.

"The president has been blunt, forthright, strong on a lot of these key issues, particularly the question of making sure you rein in these outrageous bonuses, but I think that there hasn't been adequate follow-up in terms of his economic team," said Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore.

Asked for an assessment of Geithner's performance so far, Wyden would only say, "I want them to get their act together. I want the economic team to have a coordinated message that carries through with what the president has told the American people are his priorities."

Republicans went much further. Several of them called Thursday for the Treasury chief's resignation, and in a somewhat odd twist, ended up essentially taking Dodd's side in the intramural fight by blaming Geithner for weakening the Democratic senator's executive pay proposal.

As former chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Geithner worked closely with AIG, leading some lawmakers to question how he could have failed to know that the company had a bonus program that would be affected by the language Congress approved last month.

"You're talking about the administration. Individuals either did know or should have known," said Rep. Michael N. Castle, R-Del.

The public blame-game obscures a truism of behind-the-scenes haggling on Capitol Hill.

In final, late-night, closed-door negotiations on major legislation, the administration and congressional leaders — often through their aides — cut scores of deals on a wide variety of issues in a mad rush to get the bill ready for a vote. As they trade legislative drafts, lawmakers routinely agree to changes large and small requested by the administration, all in the name of sealing a final deal.

In the case of the bonus language, the Obama administration asked to confine the executive pay restrictions to contracts made after Feb. 11, 2009, fearing lawsuits if they tried to reach back further.

They also argued, as President George W. Bush's team had before them, that enacting strict compensation limits could hamper companies' ability to attract and retain vital talent at in tough financial times, according to aides who spoke privately about the internal talks.

"But for Sen. Dodd, there would be nothing in this legislation" on the issue, Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., told reporters. "I think we did the very best we could." □

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Americans, Canadians among 11 dead in Mexico crash

By **MARK WALSH**
Associated Press Writer
SALTILLO, Mexico (AP) — A drunken driver lost control of his tractor-trailer and slammed into a bus carrying Canadians and Americans touring northern Mexico, killing 11, officials said Tuesday.

Seven Americans, three Canadians and the Mexican bus driver were killed, said Jose Angel Herrera, a federal homicide detective in northern Coahuila state.

They included two Texas middle school teachers on a spring break, a retiree from Iowa and a Quebec business consultant easing into retirement with a tour of the U.S. and Mexico. Many were snowbirds from colder climes who spent their winters in Texas' Rio Grande Valley.

Todd Huizinga, a spokesman for the U.S. consulate in the nearby city of Monterrey, said nine Americans were injured and that most were in stable condition.

Herrera said the tractor-trailer driver lost control, swerved onto the shoulder to his left, then overcompensated to the right and crashed into the bus coming from the opposite direction on Monday. State civil defense officials said 16 people were injured, many seriously.

Photos showed much of the side of the bus torn off.

"I can't believe anybody got out alive," said Beverley Kinnammon after speaking by

phone with her sister, Barbara Jewell Dalke, of Mission, Texas, one of the survivors.

"She said it was really bad," Kinnammon said by telephone after speaking with her sister earlier in the day. "We feel very lucky that Barbara seems to be OK."

Herrera said the truck driver, who was among those hurt, had been intoxicated and would be charged with involuntary homicide.

Two of those killed were middle-school reading teachers at Cummings Middle School in Brownsville, Texas: Ana Maria Bujanos of Brownsville and Rebecca Pemelton of Harlingen.

"Tomorrow would have been our 33rd wedding anniversary, that's why I'm taking it so hard," said Buanos' husband, Chris.

Bujanos, 56, had taken similar trips for years, her husband said. The Canadian Press news agency identified the Canadians who died as Robert Lacas, 56, of Quebec, Carolyn Kowaleski, 68, of Caledonia, Ontario, and Marilyn Jackson, 67, of Vancouver.

Lacas was "a man who worked hard all his life and was finally, slowly going into semiretirement and he was really excited about taking this trip," said Jean-Luc Morin, who worked with Lacas for 14 years. Lacas's wife, Line Carrier, 55, was among the four injured Canadians.

The couple had been touring the southern United States in a recreational vehicle. They left it at a campground in McAllen and boarded the bus for a whirlwind trip in northeastern Mexico, Carrier's son Christian Poulin said.

"They raised their family, worked hard and were thinking about themselves — and it was time to do that — and sadly misfortune has befallen them," Poulin said.

Ron Christy 73, of West Liberty, Iowa was an avid bocce ball and shuffleboard player who operated the sound system for dances and church services at an RV park in Donna, Texas, where he wintered with his wife Margaret Christy, 69.

Park manager Patty Wigdahl said Margaret Christy told her



Rescue workers stand next to the bodies of people killed during a crash accident on the outskirts of Saltillo, in the Mexican state of Coahuila, Monday, March 16, 2009. A tractor-trailer slammed into a bus carrying Canadian and U.S. tourists killing 11, officials said Tuesday.

Associated Press

by telephone that she had been sitting beside her husband near the front of the bus, where shades were drawn to block the sun, and moved back to find an unblocked window. The crash then ripped a hole in the front of the bus.

Mexico's Foreign Relations Department issued a statement expressing its "most sincere condolences" to the victims' families and it offered to help with any paperwork the relatives may face.

The passengers were on a

four-day tour of the Mexican cities of Zacatecas and Real de Catorce, according to a travel brochure from Viva Mexico Tours, which hired the bus.

The owners of the McAllen, Texas, tour business, Tomas and Aida Gonzalez, were on their way back from visiting the injured in Mexican hospitals Tuesday, said Irma Gomez, who was asked by the owners to come in and answer phone calls. "We're praying for the families," Gomez said.

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Friday, March 20, 2009



The secretary general of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, center, escorted by Iraqis arrives for a meeting with the country's most influential Shiite spiritual leader, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, unseen, in Najaf, Iraq, Thursday, March 19, 2009.

Associated Press

IRAQ WAR

Continued from Page B1

In a sign of political tension, the official in charge of the west Baghdad branch of the biggest Sunni Arab political group, the Iraqi Islamic Party, was fatally injured late Wednesday by a bomb hidden on his car, police said. The U.S. military is hoping to leave

without the country disintegrating into chaos. At least 4,259 members of the U.S. military have died since the war began.

The decline in violence is largely attributed to a 2007 U.S. troop buildup, a Sunni revolt against al-Qaida in Iraq and a militia cease-fire called by Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

A key Sadrist aide on Thursday demanded a faster U.S. withdrawal.

"Iraq will never see stabilization unless all occupation forces are withdrawn. Any presence on any military base will exacerbate the problems," Sheik Salah al-Obeidi said.

"We haven't seen any change from the last anniversary until now," he added. "Other challenges are the ethical and financial corruption that Iraq will likely have to live with for years due to this occupation."

Al-Sadr, who led the feared Mahdi Army militia, ordered most of his followers to lay down their arms to form a new social welfare network, although he retained a small fighting force.

He renewed his call for members of the network known as Momahidoun — or "those who pave the way" — to denounce violence in a statement issued by his office in the Shiite holy city of Najaf.

"We praise and highly appreciate the work of those who are leading or participating in the big and effective Momahidoun project," al-Sadr said. "We hope they will continue to denounce violence and to raise science

and culture as a weapon."

Al-Sadr, who is believed to be in Iran, is trying to position himself as a political force ahead of national elections expected later this year. He also faces a challenge from breakaway Shiite militia groups that continue to stage attacks on U.S. and Iraqi forces.

Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa also said the withdrawal of U.S. forces will be a key factor in achieving national reconciliation in Iraq.

"Iraq's stability can only be achieved through two key things ... to stop all sectarianism polarization and the withdrawal of the U.S. forces," Moussa said after meeting Iraq's senior Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani in the holy city of Najaf. "These two things are linked."

Moussa's mostly Sunni 22-nation organization has begun to engage with the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government after shunning it for years following the U.S.-led invasion.

His visit and push for reconciliation comes as many of his member nations are seeking to prevent Iran from gaining dominant influence in Iraq with the impending withdrawal of American forces by the end of 2011. □



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	matinee:	12:55	3:10	late show:	12:05
R	GRAN TORINO				
	daily:	4:50	7:25	9:40	
	matinee:	11:55	2:20	late show:	12:10
R	WATCHMEN				
	daily:	4:40	7:50		
	matinee:	1:25		late show:	11:00
PG	THE PINK PANTHER 2				
	daily:	4:00	6:20	8:20	10:20
	matinee:	12:00	2:05	late show:	12:30
R	THE INTERNATIONAL				
	daily:	4:55	7:20	9:50	
	matinee:	12:05	2:30	late show:	12:20
PG	PAUL BLART: MALL COP				
	daily:	4:15	6:20	8:20	10:15
	matinee:	12:10	2:15	late show:	12:15

AT PASEO HERENCIA

PG-13	MADEA GOES TO JAIL				NEW
	daily:		5:30	7:45	10:00
	matinee:	1:00	3:20	late show:	12:20
R	WATCHMEN				
	daily:	4:40	8:00		
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R	GRAN TORINO				
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R	THE INTERNATIONAL				
	daily:	4:50	7:20	9:50	
	matinee:	11:55	2:25	late show:	12:15
PG	PAUL BLART: MALL COP				
	daily:	4:15	6:10	8:10	10:15
	matinee:	12:10	2:15	late show:	12:25
PG	THE PINK PANTHER 2				
	daily:	3:40	5:50	7:50	9:55
	matinee:	1:40		late show:	12:00

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2 U.S. journalists detained by N. Korea for filming

By JEAN H. LEE

Associated Press Writer

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Two American journalists were missing Friday after they were reportedly detained by North Korea for ignoring warnings to stop shooting footage of the reclusive country.

Journalists Laura Ling and Euna Lee, reporters for former Vice President Al Gore's online media outlet Current TV, were seized Tuesday along the Chinese-North Korean border, according to news reports and an activist who had worked with them. Their Chinese guide also was detained although a third journalist with the group, Mitch Koss, apparently eluded capture.

U.S. officials expressed concern to North Korean officials about the reported detentions and said they were working with the Chinese government to ascertain the whereabouts of the Americans.

"When you have two American citizens who are being held against their will, we want to find out all the facts and gain their release," said State Department spokesman Robert A. Wood.

U.S. officials also were in contact with Swedish diplomats in North Korea. Sweden's Ambassador to Pyongyang, Mats Foyer, refused to say in an e-mail whether negotiations for the Americans' release were under way. The U.S. does not have direct relations with North Korea, a communist country, and Sweden acts as its representative.

Calls to North Korea's mission to the United Nations in New York went unanswered Thursday.

In San Francisco, an employee of Current TV told reporters: "There will be no comment on the situation anytime today."

Ling is a sister of Lisa Ling, a former co-host of the American TV talk show "The View" and now a contributing correspondent for Explorer. She said the family had no comment.

The arrests come at a time of heightened tension on the Korean peninsula, with North Korea declaring its intention to shoot a satellite into space next month.

Fearing the launch will be a cover for the test-fire of a long-range missile, regional powers are urging the North to refrain from firing any rockets.

In Washington, the top U.S. commander in the Pacific, Adm. Timothy Keating, called the launch a threat to U.S. security.

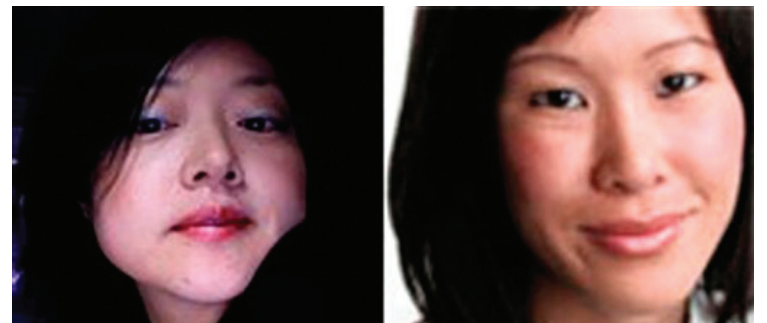
"We'll be prepared to respond," he told lawmakers, adding that "the United States has the capability" to shoot down any missile.

South Korean media first reported the detentions early Thursday, with YTN television saying two Americans were arrested near the Tumen River dividing North Korea and China. The Yonhap news agency, citing diplomatic sources, said North Korean soldiers took them into custody after they ignored orders to stop filming.

Reporters Without Borders called for the immediate release of the journalists and their guide and urged Chinese authorities to intercede on their behalf "as they were probably on Chinese soil when they were arrested."

The group said it is difficult for the foreign press to work freely in the Chinese border province of Jilin. It ranks North Korea lower than any other Asian country on its press freedom index.

North Korea is one of the world's most isolated and repressive nations, run with absolute authority by leader Kim Jong Il. It is also one of the poorest countries, its economy devastated by flooding and mismanagement, with millions relying on outside food aid. □



These undated photo show two American journalists Laura Ling, right, and Euna Lee. Ling and Lee were detained by North Korean soldiers while on a reporting trip earlier in the week near the country's border with China.

Associated Press



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At Papillon Restaurant in The Village Henri Charrière would have had the time of his life



PALM BEACH - Henri Charrière, one of the world's most famous prisoners, would surely have had the time of his life at Papillon Restaurant in The Village, across from the Radisson Resort. Nicknamed Papillon because of the butterfly tattoo on his chest, the Frenchman was the first convict to escape from Devil's Island, something that nobody had ever done before. Charrière's thrilling, gripping autobiography has been the concept behind Papillon Restaurant. The décor, the decorations and especially the restrooms wink

at the thirteen terrible years Papillon spent in prison in French Guyana.

Papillon Restaurant's menu reflects the Frenchman's arduous journey to freedom: classic French dishes have been dusted with daring Caribbean flair and are a culinary journey for your taste buds. The spacious outside terrace is perfect for casual fine dining; the

iron bars, flecks of rust and stains on the walls make one very glad not to be in Papillon's shoes in the 1940's! Charrière would undoubtedly have loved 'his' place on Aruba: this is luxury living for anyone!

Papillon's opening hours are from 5 pm until midnight. The restaurant's daily specials will be explained by the staff. For reservations, please call 5865400.



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People from all over the world get together at Bugaloe: they have a few drinks,

a bite to eat, they dance and sway and make new friends. If you have gotten curious here and now, check out the website www.bugaloe.com and you will see at one glance what we are talking about. No words will be needed anymore. Surf to the website for the Bugaloe Event Calendar or leave a note in the Guestbook.

Bugaloe's daily Happy Hours are considered the starting signal for an evening of partying on the island. Locals mingle with visitors and raise their glasses. When you get hungry, order a scrumptious burger, a gourmet pizza, tasty wings or a salad and party on. The night is young, the world is going crazy and you are right in the middle of a super happening. What's not to like? A twice-a-month live breakfast radio show on Fri-

day mornings with a spectacular breakfast buffet will keep you entertained as well.

A hot tip: Bugaloe Beach Bar puts on live bands on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Joyride, Lotus (YouTube keywords: lotus, bugaloe) and Marisela & Aquarius (YouTube keywords: marisela, confidential, 2008) are playing the stars from the sky. These bands are drawing the crowds, so be there or be square! On those nights the young as well as the young-at-heart are having the time of their lives. Photos of Bugaloe's happy times can be viewed at www.bugaloe.com. Don't forget to put your own movie of you and your friends having a whale of a time at Bugaloe on the web and enjoy being famous, crazy and hilarious. So upload, upload! We are looking forward to seeing you on YouTube or live in action.




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SPORTS

Aruba TODAY

NBA Roundup

Pierce scores 36 as Celtics beat Wade-less Heat

BOSTON (AP) — Paul Pierce scored 36 points as the Boston Celtics clinched the Atlantic Division title with a 112-108 victory Wednesday over the Miami Heat, who played without NBA scoring-leader Dwyane Wade.

Wade missed his first game of the season because of a right hip flexor.

But Boston was without Kevin Garnett for the 13th straight game with a strained right knee and Ray Allen, who hyperextended his elbow Tuesday night in a loss at Chicago.

Rajon Rondo had 27 for Boston. Miami, in its third overtime game in its last five, was led by Michael Beasley with 21 points and Mario Chalmers with 19.

Wade's injury ended his career-long streak off 66 straight games played. The Heat did not say how long he would be sidelined, and he was not ruled out of games Friday night at New Jersey and Sunday against Detroit.

Suns 126, 76ers 116

At Phoenix, Jason Richardson scored 23 of his 25 points in the second half, and Shaquille O'Neal had 26 points and 11 rebounds in Phoenix's twin over Philadelphia.

Steve Nash added 24 points and 10 assists to help the Suns move within four games of idle Dallas for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference.

Andre Miller had 23 points and eight assists, and Thaddeus Young also had 23 points for Philadelphia. The loss ended the 76ers' winning streak at four games.

Rockets 106, Pistons 101, 2 OT
At Houston, Yao Ming scored 31 points and Ron Artest added 26 to lead Houston past undermanned Detroit.

Aaron Brooks scored seven of his 14 points in the extra periods, helping the Rockets stay in third place in the Western



Boston Celtics' Paul Pierce (34) drives to the hoop against Miami Heat forward Michael Beasley (30) and center Jamaal Magloire (hidden, left) during the overtime period of an NBA basketball game in Boston Wednesday, March 18, 2009. The Celtics won 112-108 in overtime.

Associated Press

Conference standings.

Arron Afflalo scored 24 points, Rodney Stuckey added 21 points with 10 assists and Antonio McDyess grabbed 20 rebounds for the Pistons, who played without Richard Hamilton (groin), Allen Iverson (back) and Rasheed Wallace (calf strain).

At New Orleans, Chris Paul capped a 26-point, 10-assist, five-steal performance for New Orleans by setting up David West's dunk with 12.6 seconds left against Minnesota.

Minnesota's Randy Foye missed a 17-foot jumper as time expired, allowing New Orleans to escape with the victory. But it was an officials' review of a long-range shot Foye made earlier in the fourth quarter that also affected the outcome. The shot was initially ruled a 3, but the Wolves had a point taken off the board after a replay review during a timeout a few minutes later.

Kevin Love had 23 points and 11 rebounds for Minnesota.

At Oklahoma City, Derrick Rose scored 20 of his 25 points

and didn't miss a shot in the second half as Chicago snapped a seven-game road losing streak with a win over Oklahoma City. Rose was unstoppable in the second half. The No. 1 pick in last year's draft hit all 10 of his shots. Russell Westbrook, the fourth overall pick in the draft, had 15 points

Kevin Durant led Oklahoma City with 28 points. At Milwaukee, Dwight Howard had 28 points and came up three assists short of a triple double, powering Orlando past Milwaukee.

Howard finished with 12 rebounds and seven assists, while Hedo Turkoglu added 14 points and 10 rebounds for Orlando. The Magic rebounded from a loss to Cleveland on Tuesday night to win for the eighth time in their last 10 games. Charlie Villanueva had 17 points for the Bucks.

At New York, Vince Carter scored 29 points and Brook Lopez had 23 to help New Jersey beat New York and salvage the final game of an otherwise miserable five-game trip. □

Sorenstam pregnant with first child



This is a Feb. 3, 2009 file photo showing Annika Sorenstam after making a putt on the first hole of the Annika Celebration golf skins game in Reunion, Fla.

Associated Press

Browns' Stallworth reportedly driving drunk in fatal crash



In this Nov. 6, 2008 file photo, Cleveland Browns Donte Stallworth in action against the Denver Broncos in an NFL football game in Cleveland.

Associated Press
MIAMI — Cleveland Browns wide receiver Donte Stallworth was driving drunk when he struck and killed a pedestrian, according to published and broadcast reports Thursday. WSVN-TV reported Thursday that unnamed sources with knowledge of the investigation said Stallworth's blood-alcohol level was between .08 and .16. The legal limit is .08. The Miami Herald also cited

ORLANDO, Fla. — Not long after stepping away from golf, Annika Sorenstam is stepping into motherhood.

Sorenstam announced on her blog Thursday that she and her husband, Mike McGee, are expecting their first child this fall. Sorenstam retired from the LPGA Tour last year after 72 victories and 10 majors, saying she wanted to start a business and a family.

"We have had a lot of exciting changes in the past few months, and adding a new addition to our family later this fall will certainly be at the top of that list," Sorenstam said. "We are absolutely thrilled and look forward to this new chapter of our lives." □

an unnamed source as saying that Stallworth's blood-alcohol level was above the legal limit. The Miami Beach Police Department refused to confirm the reports. Ed Griffith, spokesman for Miami-Dade County prosecutor Katherine Fernandez Rundle, would say only that the investigation is focusing on whether alcohol was a factor in the death of 59-year-old Mario Reyes.

Reyes was struck and killed by a Bentley driven by Stallworth about 7 a.m. Saturday morning. Reyes, a crane operator, had just gotten off work and was trying to catch a bus when he was hit.

No charges have been filed against Stallworth, 28. His agent, Drew Rosenhaus, nor his attorney, Robert Switke, returned calls from The Associated Press seeking comment. Stallworth issued a statement Wednesday saying he was "grief stricken" over Reyes' death.

If Stallworth was drunk, he could be charged with DUI manslaughter which carries a maximum 15-year prison sentence. □

NCAA Roundup

UConn thrashes No. 16 Chattanooga without Calhoun

By DAN GELSTON

AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA — With their coach in the hospital, A.J. Price and Hasheem Thabeet scored 20 points apiece to lead top-seeded Connecticut to a 103-47 rout over Chattanooga on Thursday for its first postseason win in three years. UConn coach Jim Calhoun missed the game because he wasn't feeling well and was hospitalized for tests. He will be kept overnight for observation.

UConn will meet Texas A&M in Saturday's second-round game of the West Regional of the NCAA tournament.

Associate head coach George Blaney coached the Huskies (28-4) in Calhoun's absence. Stanley Robinson topped the Huskies with 24 points.

The Southern Conference champion Mocs (18-17) were pumped for their shot at becoming the first No. 16 seed to beat a No. 1 in the tournament. They had a nice start, but were simply overmatched by one of the best teams in basketball.

The 56-point difference was the third-largest margin of victory in the NCAA tournament.

Price, Thabeet, Robinson and the rest of the Huskies are

determined to put the 4-3 finish to the season, which included a six-overtime loss to Syracuse in the Big East tournament, behind them and make a serious run at Calhoun's third national title.

While the Huskies surely missed the Hall of Famer on the sideline, they perhaps could take comfort in this: This is the third NCAA tournament game Calhoun has missed. In the two previous instances, UConn went on to win the national title.

Price, his rocky run at UConn marked by a brain hemorrhage and suspension, took care of any early thoughts Chattanooga had of pulling off the greatest upset in tournament history.

He hit 3 straight 3-pointers in a 14-0 run that squashed the Mocs and took care of UConn's five-game postseason losing streak dating back to the 2006 regional final.

Price could have shot three airballs in that span and the Mocs still would have been thumped.

Chattanooga went the final 7:39 of the first half without a field goal, and didn't score a point in the second half until Kevin Goffney made two free throws 4:18 into the half. Goffney led the Mocs with 15 points.

At that point, UConn's lead was 63-22. The game resembled one of those early November thrashings that lightweight teams are usually paid to take at Gampel Pavilion.

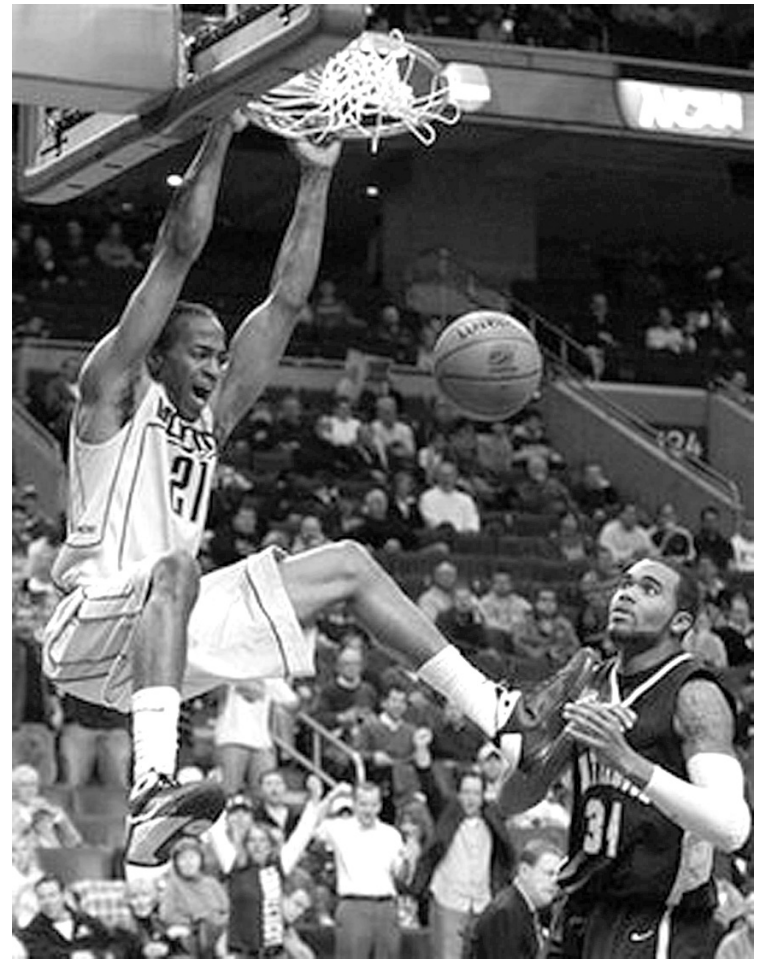
The Huskies, one of three No. 1 seeds out of the Big East, were loose in pregame warmups and that easygoing attitude carried over into one of their easiest victories of the season.

Blaney, who coached Holy Cross in three NCAA tournaments, was introduced as UConn's head coach during introductions and he shook hands with Chattanooga coach John Shulman. That was about the last time Shulman had reason to smile.

The Mocs had a brief, competitive glimpse of what it was like to go head-to-head with the Huskies. Goffney sank a 3-pointer and Jeremy Saffore hit a nice hook shot to pull them within two going into a timeout.

Oh, how the good times didn't last.

Price made his first 3, and then another after Chattanooga missed some easy looks under the basket. Goffney shot an airball, and Price added one more for a 28-15 lead.



Japan's Norichika Aoki is greeted by teammate Akinori Iwamura, right, after scoring in the third inning during their World Baseball Classic game at PETCO Park in San Diego Wednesday, March 18, 2009.

Associated Press

Tar Heels roll past Radford 101-58 in NCAA opener

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Tyler Hansbrough took quick care of his latest record pursuit, then helped North Carolina advance in the NCAA tournament without one of its star playmakers.

Hansbrough set the Atlantic Coast Conference career scoring mark in the opening minutes and finished with 22 points to help the Tar Heels beat Radford 101-58 on Thursday, giving the South Region's top seed another easy tournament opener in their home state.

Wayne Ellington had 25 points for the Tar Heels (29-4), who led the entire way and had no trouble beating the 16th-seeded Highlanders even with point guard Ty Lawson, who missed his third straight game with a toe injury.

North Carolina improved to 26-1 in NCAA games played in

its home state and advanced to face LSU on Saturday.

The Tar Heels led by 19 at halftime before steadily increasing the margin against Radford (21-12), the Big South Conference champion making just its second NCAA appearance. Amir Johnson and Joey Lynch-Flohr each scored 12 points to lead the Highlanders, whose last tournament appearance came in 1998. Hansbrough, the reigning

national player of the year, came in with 2,767 points and needed three to pass Duke's J.J. Redick for the ACC record. The 6-foot-9 senior missed his first two shots before tying Redick on a layup about 3 1/2 minutes in, then broke the record on a free throw with 15:43 left in the first half. The record wasn't announced, but the crowd — packed with fans wearing light blue — knew immediately when it happened. □

Thabeet seemed to wrap up every Mocs miss in the first half, and there were plenty — they missed 26 of 33 attempts. Price missed his freshman season after suffering a brain hemorrhage, then sat out another full season for his role in the theft of four laptop computers from a campus dormitory. And when he was poised to make an impact in last year's tournament, he suffered a torn ACL in the first half of Connecticut's overtime loss against San Diego.

That made it two straight NCAA defeats for the Huskies, who didn't make the tournament in 2007, to go along with three straight first-game exits in the Big East tournament. The fifth straight postseason defeat was the classic 127-117 six-overtime

thriller against the Orange in a Big East quarterfinal that stretched nearly four hours.

The Huskies were determined to put all the distractions — including Jerome Dyson's season-ending knee injury — behind them and focus on returning to their old dominating form. Now they have to wonder when they'll have Calhoun back.

The 66-year-old Calhoun has missed 21 games in his career and he didn't miss much in this lopsided effort.

Robinson slammed home a fantastic alley-oop pass for a 54-20 lead that got the loudest cheers of the game. He ran around the court, waving his arms and encouraged the noise while his teammates mobbed him going into the huddle. □

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Japan's Norichika Aoki is greeted by teammate Akinori Iwamura, right, after scoring in the third inning during their World Baseball Classic game at PETCO Park in San Diego Wednesday, March 18, 2009.

Associated Press

Japan beats Cuba to semis, Venezuela downs U.. 10-6

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Defending champion Japan claimed the last remaining World Baseball Classic semifinals spot with a 5-0 win over Cuba, while Venezuela finished top of its second round group with a 10-6 win over the United States on Wednesday.

Japan scored two unearned runs with two outs in the fourth inning on a foggy night at Petco Park when Cuban center fielder Yoennis Cespedes committed a two-base error on Michihiro Ogasawara's high fly ball.

Even though it was hit into heavy fog and Cespedes had a long run, he seemed to see the ball and had it in his glove before it popped out, glanced off his cap and rolled to the wall.

Japan joins South Korea, Venezuela and the United States in the semifinals. Japan will play Korea on Thursday night at Petco Park to determine the seedings from Group 1. South Korea clinched its spot in the semis with a 4-1 win over Japan on Tuesday.

The loser will play Venezuela on Saturday while the winner will play the United States on Sunday.

Wednesday's loss was the first time since 1951 that the Cubans failed to reach the finals of a major international competition. They had made the finals 40 straight times in the IBAF World Cup, the Intercontinental Cup, the Olympics and the WBC.

"It meant a lot," Japanese manager Tatsunori Hara said. "It was a big deal for us. It will be left in history. I have great respect for Cuba."

Norichika Aoki went 4-for-5 with two RBIs and one run scored. Ichiro Suzuki went 2-for-5 to raise his WBC average to .214. He tripled in the ninth and scored on Aoki's single.

Hisashi Iwakuma and Toshiya Sugiuchi combined to five-hit the Cubans.

Three years ago at Petco Park, Japan beat Cuba 10-6 to win the inaugural WBC.

Cuban manager Higinio Velez skipped the postgame news conference but issued a statement.

"I would like to congratulate the Japanese team for their great victory tonight. They were much better than us, and that's why they deserved the victory. They do deserve to go on to the finals. So the only thing left for us to do is to continue to fight for our great game, baseball."

Japan beat Cuba for the second time in four days and the third time in two WBCs. Boston Red Sox ace Daisuke Matsuzaka, who earned the win in the 2006 title game, dominated for six innings in a 6-0 win on Sunday.

Earlier, U.S. first baseman Adam Dunn made a wild throw that led to four unearned runs as Venezuela beat the Americans to top Group 2 in their final group game.

Max Ramirez had a three-run homer for Venezuela, which finished with 15 hits.

Venezuela will play the second-seeded team from Group 1 on Saturday at Dodger Stadium, and the Americans will play in the other semifinal Sunday.

The United States qualified for the semifinals for the first time by scoring three runs in the ninth inning Tuesday night to beat Puerto Rico 6-5. □




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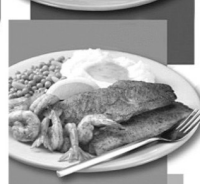
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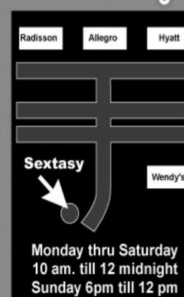
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Fiscalía Venezuela solicita arresto de líder opositor

CARACAS (Reuters) - La solicitud de la Fiscalía venezolana de privar de libertad a unos de los principales líderes de la oposición podría consumir la amenaza que hizo meses atrás el presidente Hugo Chávez: “Yo estoy decidido a meter preso a Manuel Rosales”.

Una corte decidirá dentro de pocos días si aplica la medida pedida el jueves por una de las fiscales del caso de enriquecimiento ilícito contra el alcalde de Maracaibo, que fue respondida airadamente por adversarios del Gobierno.

“Este no es un problema de fiscales. Este es un problema de Hugo Chávez, cobarde y llorón, cuando le ha tocado enfrentar circunstancias difíciles (...) este es un problema político, esta es una orden de Chávez”, dijo Rosales, derrotado por el mandatario en las presidenciales del 2006. Sus abogados aseguraron que el texto que pide su privación de libertad

contempla también la posibilidad de que se apliquen medidas más suaves, como la prohibición de salir del país. Pero él mismo aseguró que enfrentará cualquier situación, pese a que denunció que se han violado sus derechos.

La medida contra Rosales constituye la acción más dura contra un detractor en años recientes y supondría entre 3 y 10 años de cárcel si se prueba un presunto delito cometido durante su gestión como gobernador del occidental estado Zulia, entre el 2002 y el 2004.

El funcionario niega cualquier acto de corrupción y asegura que ya fue absuelto por la misma acusación años atrás.

FUERTE REACCION

Críticos al Gobierno afirman que el ataque atenta contra la democracia, en vista que la Fiscalía y la Asamblea Nacional activaron investigaciones contra Rosales a instancias de

Chávez, y denunciaron que el oficialismo busca anular a cualquier adversario que conquiste poder.

“Tenemos que hacerle frente a esta situación, porque no es contra Rosales, es contra los valores democráticos”, dijo el diputado Ismael García, del partido Podemos, que se escindió del “chavismo” pocos años atrás.

“No es un problema de corrupción lo que está en discusión en este momento porque este es el Gobierno más corrupto que ha tenido toda la historia democrática de Venezuela”, agregó.

Una condena impediría al líder opositor postularse nuevamente a la presidencia en los comicios del 2012.

Por su parte, Omar Barboza presidente de la agrupación en que milita Rosales, Un Nuevo Tiempo (UNT), dijo que se había activado una persecución política contra opositores mientras se trataba de imponer una “dictadura militar”.

Sin embargo, advirtió que la reacción se dará en el



El alcalde Manuel Rosales durante un discurso a sus partidarios en Maracaibo, Venezuela, 19 mar 2009. REUTERS/Isaac Urrutia/Files

marco de la democracia y sin seguir el “camino de las aventuras”, anticipándose a la acusación de golpista que Chávez endilga a sus adversarios desde su breve derrocamiento en el 2002.

Al mismo tiempo, coincidieron en que el mandatario ha apuntado en días recientes a quitar poder a gobernadores y alcaldes opositores, que ganaron tan sólo un 20 por ciento de los cargos en las elecciones regionales de noviembre. Desde hace menos de una semana, una reforma legal -

elaborada en el Legislativo, que domina el oficialismo- quitó a los estados el control sobre puertos, aeropuertos y autopistas, mientras se advierte la posibilidad de que Chávez nombre vicepresidentes con autoridad sobre las regiones.

Para esos comicios, más de 200 dirigentes -la mayoría de oposición- fueron inhabilitados políticamente por la Contraloría pese a no tener sentencia firme en los casos de corrupción que se les sigue. □

Avioneta se estrella sobre edificio en Quito

QUITO (AP) - Una pequeña avioneta se estrelló el jueves en la mitad de un edificio en el cual abrió un boquete y estallaron llamas, en un exclusivo barrio de esta capital, sin reportes inmediatos de posibles víctimas, informó la policía.

Precisó que el hecho ocurrió hacia las 17.30 horas, por razones aún desconocidas. Un testigo del accidente, Eric Samson, relató a la AP que el aparato impactó contra el edificio de apartamentos de cuatro pisos denominado “Bellavista”, distante a unos 80 metros al norte del Hotel Quito, sobre la avenida González Suárez, en un exclusivo barrio capitalino cubierto por neblina en ese momento.

El ministro de Defensa, Javier Ponce, que llegó al lugar, dijo a los periodistas que “es un avión del ejército, un avión Beechcraft que estaba en un viaje de entrenamiento y donde iban el mayor (Julio) Zaldumbide, el teniente (Jorge) Zurita y el técnico (sargento Mario) Figueroa”. Consultado si había víctimas civiles, añadió “eso todavía no sabemos”. Minutos después del accidente, se escucharon estallidos en el interior del edificio. □

EEUU ayudará a Centroamérica en crisis económica mundial

TEGUCIGALPA (AP) - Un alto funcionario estadounidense anunció el jueves la disposición de su país de colaborar con América Central y el Caribe en medidas para enfrentar el azote de la crisis económica mundial.

“Estamos muy conscientes del embate que esa crisis tendrá en América Central y el Caribe porque son los más vulnerables en este momento”, dijo en rueda de prensa el subsecretario de Estado para Asuntos del Hemisferio Occidental, Thomas A. Shannon.

“Esta región enfrentará problemas debido a la disminución de las remesas (de sus ciudadanos que residen en Estados Unidos) y en obtener créditos con los bancos multilaterales de desarrollo”, añadió.

“Ante tal situación, Estados Unidos se enfocará en asegurar que estas naciones tengan acceso al crédito necesario para salir de la crisis y puedan proteger sus programas sociales”, afirmó.

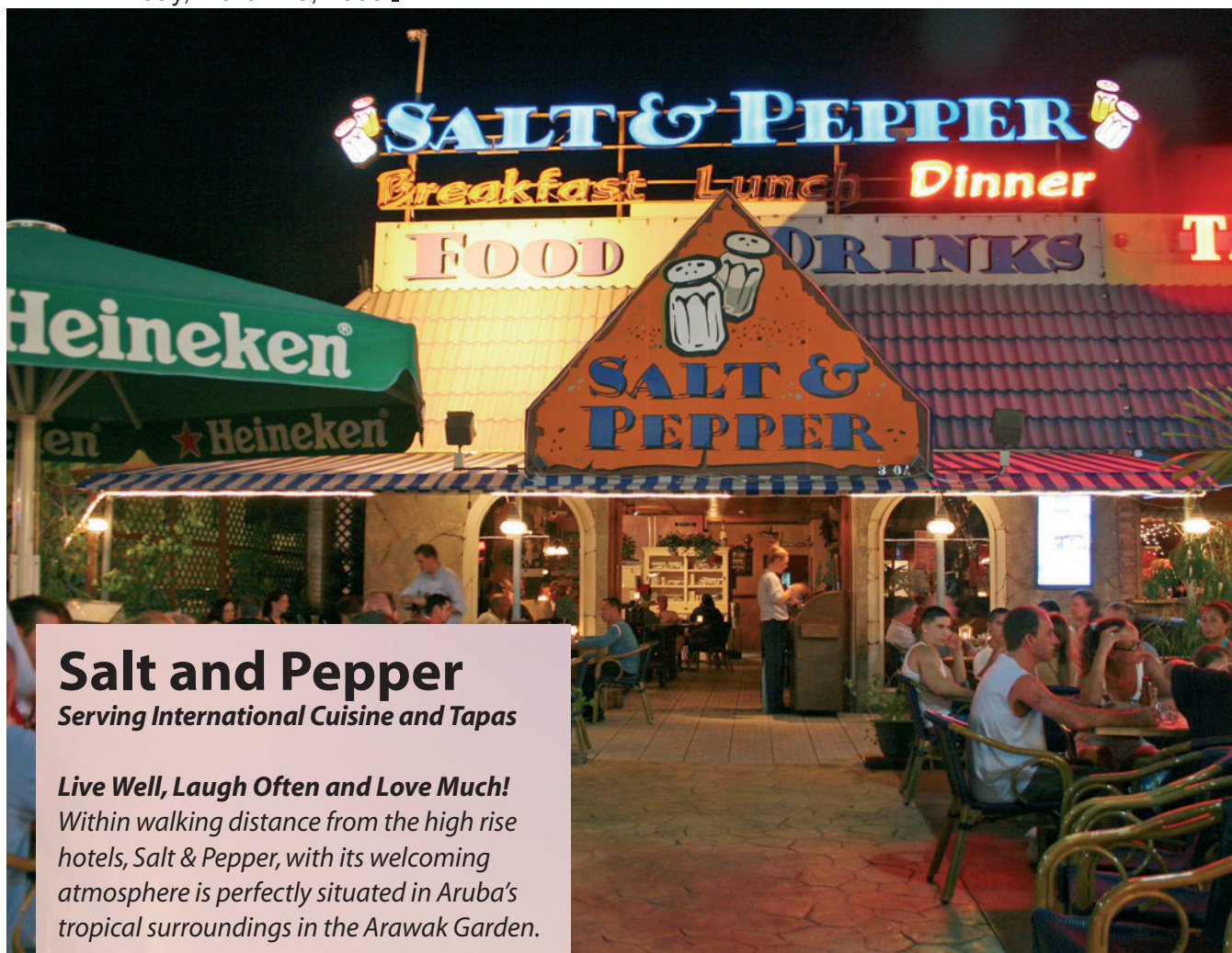
Shannon señaló además que en ese sentido “Estados Unidos hablará con los líderes de la Cumbre de los países del G-20 que se reunirán abril en Londres y la Cumbre de las Américas” a realizarse el mismo mes en Trinidad y Tobago.

Informó que el tema mereció especial atención en las conversaciones que sostuvo con el presidente hondureño Manuel Zelaya. Durante su visita de siete horas a Tegucigalpa, Shannon se entrevistó también con los candidatos presidenciales Elvin Santos, del gobernante Partido Liberal, y Porfirio Lobo Sosa, del Nacional, que contienden de cara a las elecciones de noviembre.

Shannon inició en la víspera su gira por Centroamérica en El Salvador, donde se reunió con el presidente electo, el izquierdista Mauricio Funes, a quien patentizó el respaldo de la Casa Blanca. De Tegucigalpa Shannon partió a Guatemala en donde hablará con el presidente Alvaro Colom antes de retornar el viernes a Washington. □



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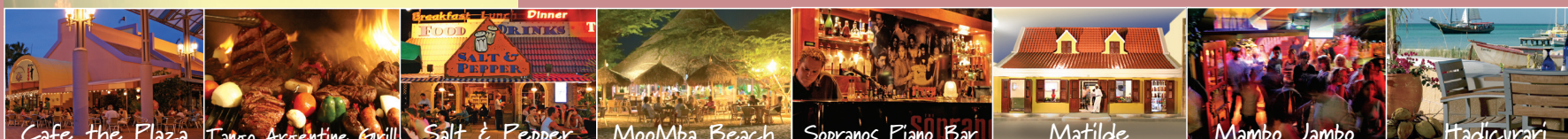
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